

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBORG

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION GENEVA

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T PARIS 31286

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR CSCE USDEL

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGSC PARM, PFOR, NATO, EEC, FR

SUBJECT: FRANCE AND SALT CONSULTATIONS

REF: A. BONN 17455

B. PARIS 29263

C. BONN 16866

1. WE ARE UNAWARE HERE OF ANY FRENCH INTEREST IN PETRIGNANI
GROUP SALT DISCUSSIONS (REFTEL A), BUT BELIEVE THEY MAY BE
CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY THAT SALT BE TAKEN UP IN EC-NINE
FRAMEWORK, AS SUGGESTED RECENTLY BY GERGORIN (REFTEL B).
FRENCH HAVE, OF COURSE, PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY DURING
NAC CONSULTATIONS ON SALT, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE REFRAINED FROM
EXPRESSING OFFICIAL POINT OF VIEW IN ACCORDANCE WITH LUCET
SECRET

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DEMARCHES OF FEBRUARY 23, 1971. NAC MEETINGS HAVE ALSO
BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY OCCASIONAL BILATERAL CONTACTS.

2. FRENCH MIGHT SEEK TO USE EC-NINE CONSIDERATION OF SALT

ISSUES AS MEANS OF FURTHERING DEVELOPMENT OF ITS POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURE. FROM FRENCH VIEWPOINT, THIS WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO PETRIGNANI GROUP, BOTH BECAUSE OF ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH NATO AND BECAUSE OF DECLINE IN GROUP'S ACTIVITIES NOTED REFTEL C. FRENCH MIGHT HOPE THAT EC-9 CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES SUCH AS FBS AND NON-TRANSFER WOULD PRODUCE "EUROPEAN VIEW", WHICH MIGHT THEN BE PRESENTED AT NAC CONSULTATION IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS EC-NINE CAUCUS HAS OPERATED VIS-A-VIS NATO GROUP AT CSCE.

3. THUS FAR WE HAVE ONLY GERGORIN'S REMARK TO SUGGEST FRENCH THINKING IN THIS DIRECTION. IN CONTRAST TO THE CSCE, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE EC-NINE TO MEET ON SALT BEFORE NATO CONSULTATIONS BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT YET HAVE THE FACTS TO WORK WITH. THEY COULD HARDLY HOPE TO PERSUADE US TO HOLD SALT BRIEFINGS WITHIN THE EC-NINE, AND IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THE OTHER ALLIES OF THE NEED FOR A CHANGE, GIVEN THE GENERAL ALLIED SATISFACTION WITH NAC SALT CONSULTATIONS IN THE PAST.

4. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE FRENCH ARE TOYING WITH THE IDEA OF GETTING THE EC-NINE INVOLVED IN SOME WAY WITH SALT, AND IN CONTRAST WITH REFTEL/C WE FRANKLY SEE MORE REASON FOR CONCERN THAN ENCOURAGEMENT IN GERGORIN'S REMARK.

IRWIN

SECRET

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